THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The existing legislations are adequate in combating the menace of counterfeit and fake products available in the market.

Liberalisation of trade in agricultural commodities

2305. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to liberalise the trade in agricultural commodities;

(b) the reasons which forced Government hitherto not to liberalise the said trade;

(c) the impact of this decision on the prices of agricultural commodities;

(d) whether the recent price rise in agricultural commodities is caused by Government's decision to liberalise trade in agricultural commodities; and

(e) if so, whether Government will review its decision on this front?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Agricultural Marketing Reforms, which submitted its report in June 2002, had made a number of recommendations to make the agricultural marketing system more vibrant and competitive. As a follow-up measure, the Central Government, in order to guide the States in the implementation of the suggested reforms, drafted a Model Act on Agricultural Marketing which, Inter-alia, provided for the establishment of direct purchase centers and farmers markets for direct sale to consumers and complete transparency in the pricing system. While some State Governments have amended the Agricultural Produce Marketing Regulation (APMC) Act, some other States have initiated action for making amendments to the Act.

(c) and (d) The reforms in agricultural trade have generally provided opportunities to the farmers for realizing better prices. The reasons for

recent rise in prices of agricultural commodities are largely short fall in domestic supplies relative to demand and hardening of international prices.

(e) Does not arise.

Foodgrain allocation to Rajasthan

†2306. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of affected villages alongwith number of districts of Rajasthan which have been declared deficient of foodgrains during the year 2005-06.

(b) the amount and the quantity of foodgrains demanded *vide* memorandum submitted by the State Government to the Centre for giving relief to the said villages;

(c) the amount and the quantity of foodgrains recommended for allocation by Central Study Group for the same; and

(d) the funds and quantity of foodgrains allocated by Centre to the State, so far, and the grounds for allocation of lesser funds and goodgrains to the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) As reported by Ministry of Agriculture, the Government of Rajasthan had, in December 2005, declared drought in 15778 villages in 22 districts in the State.

(b) to (d) On the basis of the approval by the High level Committee, upon the memorandum submitted by the State Government seeking central assistance for drought relief, an assistance of Rs. 146.50 crores from National Calamity Contingency Fund (subject to adjustment of 75% of the balance available in the State Calamity Relief Fund for the instant calamity) and 2 lakh MTs of wheat from the special component of Sampuran Gramin Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) for March and April, 2006 have been approved and released for drought relief in Rajasthan.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.